

Health council has big job to do

The Ontario Health Quality Council was formed to watch and report on how our health system is doing. Its mandate: to make certain the people of Ontario are informed about the state of the province's publicly-funded health care system. Raymond Hession of Ottawa is chair of the council and members come from Toronto to Thunder Bay.

Its role is to enhance accountability to residents by independent-

ly and objectively reporting on access to health care services, healthcare human

resources, consumer and population health status and health system outcomes. It is also supposed to report to the government, the people of the province and professional bodies with relevant evidence-based information to help them make better decisions about our health care.

The council said we want our health care system to be safe, effective, patient-centred, accessible, efficient, equitable, integrated, have appropriate resources and focused on population health. It says evidence shows our system is increasingly effective in pro-

viding care for patients with cancer or patients who have had a heart attack.

Some barriers to access to care have been overcome, Ontario hospitals have shorter acute care days, use more day surgery and have lower costs per case than hospitals in most other provinces. However, there is some indication resources are wasted due to lack of knowledge or use of proven best practices.

Access to a range of health services continues to be a problem for the poor, those in rural

areas, immigrants and aboriginals. It is difficult to people who need long-term care to be assigned to their first choice of a home. And according to the Canadian Community Health Survey, close to one million people in the province do not have a regular family doctor.

According to the council we need E-health, a model of health care centred on the consumer where stakeholders collaborate by using information technology to manage health, arrange, deliver and account for care and manage the entire system.

TODAY'S OPINION

